

**U.S. EPA, Region 9 West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast:
2007 Request for Proposals**

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 9

Funding Opportunity Name: West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R9-WTR3-07-006

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers: 66.439

Overview

U.S. EPA Region 9 is soliciting proposals under this announcement for projects that conserve, restore and protect the water quality, habitat and environment of California coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near shore waters through comprehensive approaches to water quality management. The emphasis is on supporting implementation activities based on existing plans, such as Comprehensive Conservation Management Plans (Clean Water Act Section 320), State programs such as the Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, and local watershed plans.

States, local governments, public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, U.S. territories or possessions, and interstate agencies are eligible to apply. For-profit commercial entities and all Federal agencies are ineligible. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

EPA Region 9 anticipates awarding approximately 2 to 5 grants or cooperative agreements for the California Coast under this solicitation. Awards will range from approximately \$500,000 to no more than \$1,000,000 each with project periods of three to five years. The total amount anticipated to be awarded under this announcement is \$2.5 million of funds made available via the FY2007 Revised Continuing Appropriations Public Law 110-5. If additional funds become available for the West Coast Estuaries Initiative under the FY 2008 budget within six months of funding decisions under this announcement, the total amount to be awarded and the number of awards under this announcement may be increased depending upon the quality of proposals received. EPA is requiring applicants to demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will provide the minimum non-federal match of 25 percent of the total cost of the proposal. Federally recognized Indian tribal governments may be exempt from this match requirement if fulfilling the match requirement would impose undue hardship.

The West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast is a focused effort under EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program (TWG). The TWG is designed to support the protection and restoration of the country's water resources through a holistic watershed approach to water quality management. The goal of the Targeted Watershed Grant Program is to advance successful partnerships and coalitions that have completed the necessary watershed assessments and have a technically sound watershed plan ready to implement. Under a separate announcement, EPA Region 10 is soliciting proposals as part of the West Coast Estuaries Initiative for Puget Sound.

Important Dates:

November 19, 2007.....Proposals must be received by USEPA or electronically stamped via Grants.gov by 5pm Pacific Standard Time
January 15, 2008Initial approval identified and sponsor of projects selected for funding will be requested to submit a formal application package
February 15, 2008Application and workplan received via hardcopy or through Grants.gov
May 1, 2008Awards made

The above dates (other than the November 19, 2007 proposal submission date) are anticipated dates and may be subject to change.

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Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R9-WTR3-07-006

I. Funding Opportunity Description

U.S. EPA Region 9 is soliciting proposals under this announcement for projects that conserve, restore and protect the water quality, habitat and environment of California coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near shore waters through comprehensive approaches to water quality management. California is rich with diverse and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems that benefit Californians and people across the nation in numerous ways. California's 1,100 miles of coastline and related watersheds support abundant wildlife, commercial fishing industries, and vibrant coastal communities. They provide a broad range of recreational opportunities and a variety of goods and services that are economically valuable to the State and essential to its citizens' quality of life. Some coastal ecosystems, such as wetlands and kelp forests, absorb nutrients or capture sediments from the land, thereby improving water quality and protecting important habitats. These ecosystems serve as nurseries and habitat for marine life and help to protect shore side communities from floods and storms.

During the last three decades, there have been some notable successes in protecting California's coastal resources and related ecosystems. Point source pollution has been significantly reduced. Valuable coastal assets have been purchased and placed in the public trust. Coastal development has been guided by one of the most progressive coastal management programs in the country, and our understanding of the way natural systems work together has greatly improved.

Despite these successes, significant challenges remain. California has world-class beaches, but continues to suffer beach closures as a result of bacterial pollution. More than 90 percent of the State's coastal wetlands—among the State's most valuable and productive resources—have been lost to diking, draining, and filling. Further, declining fish stocks have forced the federal government to impose significant restrictions on salmon and other types of fishing. More recently, climate change impacts have been forecast to adversely affect coastline ecosystems.

EPA is encouraging watershed practitioners to examine California's coastal resources and related ecosystems in the context of the larger watershed in which they exist, and to propose solutions that creatively apply an array of tools, including federal, state, and local programs. The goal is to advance successful watershed partnerships and coalitions that have completed the necessary assessments and have a technically sound plan ready to implement. Hence, EPA is looking for innovative ways to address California coastal water quality problems that will result in tangible, measurable environmental results.

Activities proposed for funding are not required to address the entire watershed, but are expected to be based on a comprehensive assessment and plan for the watershed. As such, all activities should directly support the described watershed plan and the requested funds should be used in accordance with the plan. Examples of watershed plans include but are not limited to, Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CWA Section 320), plans developed

under State programs such as Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, and local watershed plans. All proposals must include a monitoring component that is consistent with ensuring ongoing implementation and documenting environmental improvements.

The West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast, as a focused effort under EPA's Targeted Watershed Grant program, is linked to EPA's Strategic Plan (2003-2008 EPA's Strategic Plan). It is predicated on the concept that watersheds are improved most effectively and efficiently by managing water resource use and water quality on a watershed basis. The Targeted Watersheds Grant Program supports EPA's strategic goals

(<http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.html>) to improve and restore impaired water quality on a watershed basis and facilitate ecosystem-scale protection and restoration under EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 - Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.2 (Protect Water Quality), Sub-objective 2.2.1 (Protect and Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis) and Goal 4 - Healthy Communities and Ecosystems, Objective 4.3 (Ecosystems), Sub-objective 4.3.1 (Protect and Restore Ecosystems).

In accordance with the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan, the West Coast Estuaries Initiative aims to support projects that are likely to achieve quantifiable environmental results within the project period. Therefore, applicants for these funds must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined "outputs" and to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined "outcomes".

The term "output" means an activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced or provided over the period of time or by a specific date. The term "outcome" means an environmental result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be short-term (i.e., changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skill), intermediate (i.e., changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (i.e., changes in condition of natural resources).

Outcomes expected as a result of the awards under this announcement could include, but are not limited to:

- Actual on-the-ground water restoration or protection projects put in place.
- Baseline and resulting water quality monitoring data that indicate measurable environmental improvement.
- Local ordinances passed aimed at protection and restoration of water quality.
- Enhanced public participation and awareness of water quality issues at the community level.
- Transfer of knowledge among watershed groups across the nation.
- Improved water quality, in terms of Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) delisting of impaired water bodies, or increased recreational use of water bodies.
- Increased resilience to, or mitigation of, climate change impacts

For example, for a project aimed at reducing sediment loads, an expected output under this announcement could be the number of trees planted, the miles of riparian buffer restored, the number of culverts repaired, or other best management practices (BMPs) installed. The expected outcome of the particular activity would indicate the expected sediment reduction to be achieved

(e.g., cubic yards) in a specified time period relative to the overall goal (e.g., achieving a water quality standard, delisting a water-body segment listed as impaired under CWA Section 303(d), or attaining a milestone under a TMDL).

In another example, a proposal may be focused on reducing bacterial contamination. The anticipated output of this activity could be the number of farmers who install livestock fencing, or the number of homeowners who participate in a BMP program. Anticipated outcomes of this project could be a reduction in fecal coliform concentration, a rise in macro invertebrate populations, or the number of days a water body displays a "blue flag" (i.e., is safe for swimming, fishing, or boating).

Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/awards/5700.7.pdf> or <http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/documents/FY06NPGappendix-b.pdf>.

II. Award Information

The total amount anticipated to be awarded under this announcement is \$2.5 million of Fiscal Year 2007 funds to support 2 to 5 grants or cooperative agreements for the California Coast. Awards will range from approximately \$500,000 to no more than \$1,000,000 each and have a project period of three to five years. Proposals that request an award amount in excess of \$1,000,000 will not be considered for funding.

EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications under this announcement by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process. EPA also reserves the right to make no awards, or fewer awards than expected under this announcement.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

Selected recipients will enter into a funding agreement with the EPA Region 9. The West Coast Estuaries Initiative will fund both grants and cooperative agreements. The grants or cooperative agreements funded as a result of this announcement will be awarded under the independent authority contained in the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (P.L. 109-54). Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant in the performance of work supported by program funds. Federal involvement for projects selected may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); and/or review and

comment on the content of publications (printed or electronic) prepared (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

States, local governments, public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, U.S. territories or possessions, and interstate agencies are eligible to apply. For-profit commercial entities and all Federal agencies are ineligible. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirement

EPA is requiring applicants to demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will provide the minimum non-federal match of 25 percent of the total cost of the proposal. This means EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost. In addition to cash, matching funds can come from in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, etc., consistent with the regulations governing matching fund requirements (40 CFR 31.24 or 40 CFR 30.23). Federal funds may not be used to meet the match requirement for this grant program unless authorized by the statute governing their use.

Federally recognized Indian tribal governments may be exempt from this match requirement if fulfilling the match requirement would impose undue hardship. Tribal governments wishing to be exempt from the minimum 25 percent match requirement must submit a one-page written request with justification within 30 calendar days from the date of this announcement. Match exemption requests should be sent directly to the EPA contact listed in [Section IV.D](#). EPA will notify the potential applicant of its decision within 10 business days. If approved, the proposal will be scored as if it meets the minimum 25 percent match

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements which, if not met at the time of proposal submission, will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in [Section V](#) of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements as described in [Section III.A](#).
2. Applicants must demonstrate how they will provide a match of 25 percent of the total project cost as described in [Section III.B](#) and may not request federal funding in excess of \$1,000,000. Alternately, applicants must receive an approved match requirement exemption as described in Section III.B.
3. The proposed activities must be intended to conserve, restore and protect the water quality, habitat and environment of California coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near shore waters and be consistent with Section III. D Funding Restrictions.
4. The proposal package must contain the five components as described in [Section IV.C](#).
5. Proposals must be received by EPA or through Grants.gov on or before the solicitation closing date and time specified in Section IV. Proposals received after the closing date

and time will not be considered. Pages submitted in excess of the 12-page limitation described in [Section IV.C](#) will not be reviewed.

6. Proposals must support Strategic Plan Goal 2 of EPA's Strategic Plan as specified Section I.

D. Funding Restrictions

EPA has chosen to declare certain projects or activities ineligible for West Coast Estuaries funding. If proposals are submitted that have ineligible projects or activities, those projects or activities in the proposals will not be considered for funding.

Activities required or regulated under the CWA are ineligible. For example, activities for the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Phase II Stormwater projects will not be funded. Activities implementing the non-regulatory component of TMDLs (e.g., the elements of a watershed plan that address non-point source pollution), however, are eligible. Under this solicitation, foreign land acquisition or proposals that contain work plans with a majority of projects to be implemented outside of U.S. borders will not be considered for funding. Projects with an international workplan must directly and primarily benefit US waters.

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the "recipient" even if other eligible applicants are named as "partners" or "co-applicants" or members of a "coalition" or "consortium." The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

If successful applicants intend to use EPA grant funds to purchase goods or services under the grant, such applicants must compete the contracts for those goods and services and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of 40 CFR Part 30 or 31. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. While applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their proposal, if they do so it does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements, nor does it guarantee that costs incurred for such contractor/consultant will be eligible under the grant/cooperative agreement. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal based solely on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

Successful applicants may award subgrants (also referred to as subawards) of financial assistance to fund partnerships under the EPA grant provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subgrants/subawards including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. Proposals containing a sub-award project (also called mini-grants) are eligible, but the portion that is to be re-granted to third parties within the watershed via a smaller-scaled competition should account for no more than 20 percent of the requested funding amount. In general, subgrants/subawards do not have to be competed; however, successful applicants cannot use subgrants/subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using subgrants/subawards to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations. EPA will not be a party to subgrant/subaward agreements.

The construction of buildings or other major structures, or the purchase of major equipment or machinery will not be funded under this program.

For the purpose of this solicitation, “major equipment” is defined as an article of property of a durable nature that normally may be expected to have a period of service of a year or more after being put into use and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$10,000. Examples may include, but are not limited to vehicles, boats, motor homes, office furniture, construction equipment such as backhoes, fork-lifts, and trash booms and compaction systems. Note that the leasing of equipment may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the workplan.

For the purpose of this solicitation, “major structures” is defined as an activity that involves earth moving activities and results in a relatively permanent structure constructed over a plot of land or in a body of water that normally may be expected to have a period of service of a year or more after being put into use. Examples may include, but are not limited to, dams, reservoirs, sewage treatment centers, and cluster systems.

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable Code of Federal Regulation (formerly Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Circulars): 2 CFR 225 (formerly A-87) for States and local governments, 2 CFR 230 (formerly A-122) for nonprofit organizations, or 2 CFR 220 (formerly A-21) for universities. Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other Federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts).

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

This announcement describes all documents required to submit a proposal package. Specific Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and SF 424A, are available at <http://www.epa.gov/region09/funding/applying.html> and by mail upon request by calling the Region 9 Grants Management Office at (415) 972-3702.

B. Form of Application Submission

Applicants must submit their proposal using one of the two methods outlined below. All proposals must be prepared and include the information as described in [Section IV.C](#) regardless of mode of submission.

1. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD). Two hard copies of the complete proposal package as described below in [Section IV.C](#), and a CD of the complete proposal package may sent via mail, express mail delivery or hand delivery. Please mark all submissions:

ATTN: Dan Pingaro, West Coast Estuaries Initiative – California
US EPA Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street (WTR-3)
San Francisco, CA 94105

The CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf), Microsoft Word (.doc), or WordPerfect (.wpd). Letters of support and maps will need to be scanned so that they can be

submitted as part of the CD. Pictures and/or computer generated maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

2. Grants.gov Submission. Applicants who wish to submit their materials electronically through the federal government's Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download a proposal or application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required proposal or application package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency. Nomination letter(s), letters of support, pictures, and maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the proposal package. Pictures and/or computer generated maps must also be in an electronic format and submitted along with the proposal package.

If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal package must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process for this grant program, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions" to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package and instructions for applying under this announcement using grants.gov (https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html). You may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R9-WTR3-07-006 or the CFDA number 66.439, in the space provided. Then complete and submit the application package as indicated. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the button "How To Apply" at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Find Grant Opportunities" button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Application/proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically. Complete instructions on applying through Grants.gov can be found at: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp.

C. Content of Application Submission

The proposal package must not exceed 12 pages in length and must use no less than a 11-point font, single-spaced. Pages in excess of 12 will not be reviewed. All materials including the project narrative, budget, tables, timeline, charts, graphs, and pictures must be included within the 12 pages. The SF 424, the SF 424A, and letters of support do not count toward the 12 page limit. Any appendices aside from support letters will not be reviewed. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals.

Each proposal package must contain all of the components listed in this section. Failure to submit any of the five components will result in disqualification and removal from the selection process.

1. Proposal Narrative.

*HUCs (also known as USGS Cataloging Units) and state 303(d) listings can be found on EPA's Surf Your Watershed web site at <http://www.epa.gov/surf/>.

- A. Abstract. Provide a brief (approximately 150-word) executive summary of the proposal. This should include a description of the coastal resources to be addressed, the need for the work, the proposed work, the anticipated outputs and outcomes, and identification of the plan from which the proposed activities are based.
- B. Project Narrative. The narrative description of the proposed tasks and activities must include the following sections:
 - i. Characterization of the coastal watershed/waterbody. Describe the watershed, including any critical or significant natural resources, such as wetlands. Include a description of the physical, chemical, biological, ecological, socioeconomic, and cultural characteristics, including rural, urban, and environmental justice areas. Briefly describe the environmental problems and threats facing the watershed and the existing watershed plans and planning efforts addressing the problems and threats, including demographics of the impacts.
 - ii. Project need. Describe the environmental significance of the project, that is, the problem or conservation issue(s) to be addressed, why it is a priority, and the context relevant to the overall watershed plan. The objectives of the proposal and the immediate and long-term desired outcomes should be described relative to the overall environmental conditions. An assessment of the natural resource and environmental conditions and evidence of problem sources, along with the prioritization of the threats and impairments facing the watershed should be included. The prioritization should focus on those threats and impairments that will be addressed by the proposal. Provide evidence that sufficient comprehensive planning and assessment has been completed to ensure that the proposed activities will achieve tangible and sustainable environmental results
 - iii. Project plan. Describe the work that will be done using the West Coast Estuary Initiative funding and the non-federal matching funds. Identify the specific deliverables and the anticipated outcomes (i.e., quantifiable results) associated with the major project components.
 - a. Project components: Describe in detail the tasks and activities for each project for each year of the project period. Include milestones and/or timelines for accomplishing tasks for the project period. Explain how the projects fit together to benefit the watershed as a whole and are ready for implementation (i.e., feasibility). Include in this section why the proposal will work and what makes it

innovative. If the proposal is a market-based trading project, describe the drivers, the buyers and sellers, and the scheme already in place so that a trade can begin.

- b. Partnering: Describe how you will your partners and other stakeholders will be engaged in your project.
- c. Financial Integrity/Budget: Explanations of the costs associated with each project should be included. Description of costs should correspond to figures presented in the SF 424A (see item 6).
- d. Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes. Applicants must include specific statements describing the anticipated environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined "outputs" and to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined "outcomes" (See [Section I](#) for details on outputs and outcomes).
- e. Monitoring and measuring: Describe the water quality monitoring and assessment that will be conducted consistent with the project components. Identify appropriate environmental indicators that will be monitored, and describe the method for evaluating environmental improvements. Describe the methodology (i.e., sampling, survey models, etc.) and time table that will be used to measure progress, including your approach to measuring progress towards achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs including those identified in [Section I](#).

iv. Peer Outreach and Information Transfer. Describe the outreach component of the project. Describe the strategy for disseminating the results, including lessons learned, of the project among watershed organizations and governmental agencies with similar environmental challenges within the project watershed and to a wider (i.e., regional or national) audience. Describe how the project will promote and actively conduct technology transfer or provide technical assistance that improves the knowledge of state and local decision-makers.

v. Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/ Environmental Results Past Performance. Identify federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five and preferably EPA agreements) and briefly describe (i) how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e. outputs and outcomes) and if you were not making progress, how you documented why not; (ii) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (iii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under [Section V](#).

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Note: The proposal narrative should also include any additional information, to the extent not otherwise addressed above, that addresses the selection criteria found in [Section V.A.](#)

2. Map(s). A map of the watershed and the proposed work areas must accompany the narrative text.
3. Signed SF 424 and SF424A. In addition to the narrative text, applicants must provide a detailed breakdown of cost by category for each project on the SF 424A. All project costs including grant administration costs, matching funds, and travel (including travel expenses to the annual TWG conference (see [Section VIII.B](#))), should be included.

When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

4. Letter(s) of Support. To substantiate the information contained in the narrative portion of the submission, letters verifying partnerships and matching funds are required. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate active involvement of both public and private partners via letters of support. All letters must be on the official letterhead of the agency or organization.

A. Signed letter(s) from active partners indicating their commitment to implementing the workplan or specific proposed projects.

B. A minimum of one letter signed by an authorizing official from an entity committing to provide matching funds, either in cash or in-kind contributions, including the total value of its commitment toward the projects.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants who choose to submit their materials in hard copy form must send two copies of their complete proposal packages and the CD to:

Attn: Dan Pingaro, West Coast Estuaries Initiative – California
U.S. EPA Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street (WTR-3)
San Francisco, CA 94105
Telephone: 415-972-3579

Complete proposal packages must be **received** by US EPA at the address above via mail, hand-delivery, or express delivery service by **5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on November 19, 2007.**

Submissions through Grants.gov must be electronically stamped via Grants.gov by **5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on November 19, 2007**.

E. Intergovernmental Review

If selected for award, applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. Applicants should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her state for more information on the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance if the state has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your application is selected for funding.

F. Confidential Business Information

It is recommended that confidential business information (“CBI”) **not** be included in your proposal. However, if CBI is included in the proposal, it will be handled in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2.203. Applicants must clearly indicate which portion(s) of their proposal they are claiming as CBI. EPA will evaluate such claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant which is otherwise required by 40 CFR Part 2.204(2) prior to disclosure.

G. Proposal Communications and Assistance

In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy of January 11, 2005 (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. However, EPA will respond to questions regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

All eligible proposals, based on the [Section III](#) threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the following criteria and weights below. Points will be awarded based on how well each evaluation criterion and/or sub criterion is addressed.

Weight based on a 65 point scale.

20 points	<p>1. Quality of Proposal. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they describe project(s) that are part of comprehensive assessments and plans and reflect a watershed-based approach to conservation, protection and restoration. Reviewers will evaluate whether the approach is technically/scientifically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and measurable objectives. Under this criterion, reviewers will focus on the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feasibility. The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of priority water resource problems within the watershed, has substantially completed the assessment and planning phase, and is
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	<p>prepared to begin work. Reviewers will look at level of project development (i.e., the readiness of the project, technical merit, and expected environmental improvements) (15 points).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation. The extent and quality to which the proposal describes unique, creative or novel approaches to environmental conservation, restoration or protection. The extent and quality to which a proposal clearly articulates how the project incorporates adaptation to climate change, or mitigation of it, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption, energy use and increased use of sustainable practices will be considered under this criterion. (5 points).
10 points	<p>2. Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes/ Measuring and Monitoring. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which a proposal clearly articulates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a set of performance and progress measures with identified and measurable indicators as described in Section I of this announcement • a sound plan for measuring progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes including those identified in Section I of the announcement
5 points	<p>3. Environmental Significance. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on: (a) the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates relevance to solving an important environmental problem in that watershed and reflects state and federal environmental priorities and goals (2.5 points) and (b) the extent and quality to which the proposed project(s) are interrelated to improve the water quality and water resources, including wetlands, within the watershed (2.5 points).</p>
5 points	<p>4. Broad Support. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well they show the applicant's ability to demonstrate and substantiate strong collaborative partnerships and document effective working relationships among state, tribal, local entities, and broad-based community involvement. Scores will be based on the extent and quality to which the applicant can show a wide variety of public, private, and non-profit participation, and the level to which the applicant can demonstrate strong and diverse stakeholder stewardship and support (5 points).</p>
5 points	<p>5. Peer Outreach and Information Transfer. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the design and breadth of the outreach component. The score will be based on the extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates a clear strategy for transferring the knowledge and experience garnered to other watershed organizations and agencies with similar environmental challenges both within and beyond the affected watershed.</p>
10 points	<p>6. Financial Integrity. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the budget information provided, whether it is reasonable and</p>

	clearly presented (6 points), and the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate leveraging other funding sources to provide for more extensive and ongoing environmental results (4 points).
10 points	<p>7. Environmental Results Past Performance/ Programmatic Capability (Technical Experience) and Qualifications of the Applicant. Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Results Past Performance: The extent and quality to which the applicant adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (outcomes and outputs) under Federal agency assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not (5 points). • past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years (1 point); • history of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements (1 point); • organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project (1 point); and • Qualifications of Applicant: staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project (2 points). <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under this factor, the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (i.e., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history will receive a neutral score of half of the points available for each of those elements.</p>

B. Review and Selection Process

All proposals received by EPA or submitted electronically through Grants.gov by the solicitation deadline will be evaluated against the threshold criteria listed in [Section III](#) of this announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be considered for funding and the applicant will be so notified within 15 days of the application deadline.

All eligible proposals will be reviewed and scored by a panel of EPA staff and may include representatives from other agencies using the evaluation criteria outlined in [Section V.A](#). Based on the review, the panel will develop a list of the most highly rated proposals. Final selection will be made by the Director of the US EPA Region 9 Water Division.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by mail. Successful applicant(s) will be invited to submit a complete application package prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10) that will be due approximately 60 days after being notified. Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the completed application will be provided at that time.

EPA expects to announce its selections Winter/Spring 2008. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, specific activities, duration of the projects, and role of the EPA Project Officer will be determined in the pre-award negotiations between the selected applicant and EPA.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and work plan content prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable work plan is required to include:

1. Work plan components to be funded under the grant or cooperative agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each work plan component;
3. Work plan commitments for each work plan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA in carrying out the work plan commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted on <http://www.epa.gov/twg> website address at the conclusion of the competition. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications. Applicants will receive a notice of award through postal mail. The notice of award signed by the Award Official (or equivalent) in the Grants Administration Division is the authorizing document, and will be mailed to the individual signing the original application.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The general award and administration process for all Targeted Watersheds Grants (including the West Coast Estuary Initiative) is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements to Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations") and 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments").

DUNS Number

All applicants are required to provide a number from the Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) when applying for federal assistance agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at <http://www.dnb.com> EXIT Disclaimer.

C. Reporting

Project monitoring and reporting requirements can be found in 40 CFR Part 30.50-30.52, 40 CFR Part 31.40-31.41. In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the grant or cooperative agreement to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The format for these reports will be identified during the grant application time frame, and will include reporting on established performance measures indicated in the project description (i.e., goals, outputs and outcomes). The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired.

D. Dispute Process

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005), which can be found at:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>.

E. Administrative Capability Requirement

Nonprofit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement may be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c, and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, nonprofit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

F. Restrictions on use of Federal Funds

In accordance with the EPA policy and OMB circular, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for fund-raising, or political activities such as lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity.

VII. Agency Contact

For additional information, please contact:

Daniel Pingaro, EPA Region 9, Water Division, San Francisco, California
415.947.4275
pingaro.daniel@epa.gov

VIII. Other Information

A. Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC)

Certain quality assurance and/or quality control (QA/QC) and peer review requirements are applicable to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or condition; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data also include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and obtained from other sources such as data bases or published literature. Regulations pertaining to QA/QC requirements can be found in 40 CFR Parts 30.54 and 31.45. Additional guidance can be found at http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html#noeparqt.

Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process in their proposed projects. If your organization does not have a Quality Management System in place, one must be developed. A project specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) must be submitted and approved by EPA. Allow 4-6 months in your timeline for approval of these plans. All projects will require a QAPP.

B. Assistance Agreement Terms and Conditions

1. Annual Grantee Conference. The grantee must attend the annual National Targeted Watersheds Grantee Conference at the initiation of the project and a subsequent annual conference to be determined in consultation with the EPA Project Officer. Attendance at two conferences is mandatory. The purpose of these conferences is to provide watershed organizations with training and support to better restore, protect, and manage their watersheds, provide help and assistance regarding Agency grants management requirements and, most importantly, provide grant recipients with opportunities to share successful approaches with each other.

Attendance at a minimum of two conferences will be mandatory and will be included in the Terms and Conditions of the grant or cooperative agreement. The recipient will be allowed to use award funds to pay for travel and lodging. The cost of hosting the conference will be paid for by EPA. If the recipient wishes to use the award money for travel expenses, these costs must be included in the submitted proposed budget.

2. Information Technology. Also as a Term and Condition of the grant, recipients will be required to institute standardized reporting requirements into their workplans and include such costs in their budgets. All environmental data will be required to be entered into the Agency's Storage and Retrieval data system (STORET) and recipients may need to purchase appropriate ORACLE software. STORET is a repository for water quality, biological, and other physical data used by state environmental agencies, EPA and other federal agencies, universities, private citizens, and many other organizations. Information regarding training sessions sponsored by EPA will be provided. Watershed organizations may also want to contact their state agency responsible for entering data into the system. More information about STORET can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/STORET>.